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ABSTRACT

Because of the growing emphasis on tenure and faculty evaluation the Southern Regional Education Board conducted a survey of faculty evaluation procedures. Questionnaires received from 536 private and public institutions in a 14-state region illustrate the picture of who evaluates, how, and why. The survey showed that the department chairperson and the chief academic officer are those persons primarily responsible for evaluation. Others involved in the process at various institutions included high administrative officers, faculty committees, and students. Alumni, joint student faculty committees, or peers from other institutions are used very little in the evaluation process. The primary reason given for faculty evaluation was faculty development and improvement. Other reasons listed were to provide diagnostic information on teaching behavior and effectiveness, and to provide data on which to make decisions regarding reappointment, promotion and tenure. Evaluation is generally based on instruction, advising, administrative activities (e.g., serving on decision and policy-making committees), personal attributes, research, publications, activity in professional societies, public service, and civic activities. (JMF)

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Who Evaluates, How and Why

"Opening Up" Faculty Evaluation

Evaluation is a word historically linked with education but, heretofore, the emphasis was on the students. The Sixties, in fact, were punctuated by analyses about and experimentation into different, more appropriate grading systems for students, particularly those in college.

But in the Seventies, just as "college-age" no longer presumes youth, evaluation no longer presumes students. On the contrary, today faculty evaluation, in forms ranging from formal rituals to innovative self-made "growth contracts" to student-completed questionnaires, is dominating college and university agendas.

There is a complex of reasons why, but perhaps basic to them all is what happened to higher education between the Sixties and the Seventies. The Cooperative College Registry, a recruitment service to help colleges and universities find qualified teachers, perhaps epitomized the situation this summer when it announced it was ceasing operation because "higher education now experiences the 'poverty of plenty.'"

A decade ago, college professors were scarce, thus wooed; school populations boomed. Now, as *Saturday Review* recently put it, with the faculty manpower picture changing "so suddenly from scarcity to glut, the view of tenure

has, with equal rapidity, come in for an agonizing reappraisal." And with a reappraisal of tenure comes, inevitably, a scrutiny of the evaluation systems upon which it is granted.

It's not necessarily that tenure itself is being questioned (though some schools are investigating it) but rather that the criteria used to award it are being re-examined.

One source put it this way. "Faculty evaluation is really becoming a major issue because of the decreasing mobility of faculty. Previously, those who published and researched got tenure and the others moved out and on—and that approach was really encouraged; there was always the feeling that new blood was good." Now, however, with more and more professors staying the five or six years requisite to a tenure consideration, administrators find they must demonstrate on what basis they are granting or denying it. (Statistics bear out that need; in 1972, according to *Saturday Review*, only 43 percent of full-time faculty surveyed were tenured; in 1975, that percentage had risen to 66; and, if present systems continue, 85 percent of university full-time professors will be tenured in 10 years. In addition, according to the American Council on Education, two in every five institutions of higher education are currently reviewing tenure.)

As the professor's remarks intimate, it's not that faculty evaluation is new. What's new is the idea of "opening it up," says Dr. Loren Williams, director of the Educational Planning and Development Program at the Medical College of Virginia. "Evaluations were being made all along. Now we're trying to look more closely at the process, making it as rational as we can."

Traditionally, evaluation systems, where formal, were too often

esoteric, mysterious; where informal, too subjective and inferential. But now, to quote Dr. Lance Liebman of the Harvard Law School, "a period of explicitness is . . .arriving at colleges, long a bastion of honest statement about Senegal and Baudelaire and the atom, but a silent, cabalistic ritual in its internal affairs." (The guessing-game air of many evaluation systems led Harold Hodgkinson, now director of the National Institute of Education, HEW, to write in an article on adult development that "figuring out the *real* criteria for the award of tenure" is one mark of a professor "settling in" to the system.)

The fact that criteria for advancement and tenure have either been too vague or too restricted has also made them target for faculty unions, which see systematic evaluation systems as ultimately in their best interests; for affirmative action groups; for the public at large; and for a consumer-conscious student population. As a result, at least one state, Florida, has passed a law requiring documented faculty assessment by assigned workloads. In short, as W. E. Moomaw, associate project director, Undergraduate Education Reform at SREB, summed it up, "Faculty evaluation is all wound-up with accountability."

Because of the growing emphasis on this aspect of higher education administration, the Southern Regional Education Board recently conducted a survey of faculty evaluation procedures, directed by Dr. James E. Boyd, SREB consultant. Findings were based on questionnaires received from 536 private and public institutions in the 14-state Southern region. Completed, usually, by academic deans or their equivalents, the questionnaires aimed at getting a "nuts and bolts" picture of who evaluates, how and why.

Readily apparent from questionnaire responses is that faculty evaluation is taking on a broader connotation. It used to be a term that mean student evaluation (in contrast to "annual review" or similar terms denoting the evaluation process for reappointment, promotion and tenure). Increasingly, however, faculty evaluation is being used as a comprehensive term to include, as David Goodsell, assistant professor in the School of Education at Valdosta State College, put it, "an analysis of *all* activities a faculty member undertakes which relate directly, or—if the institution so chooses—indirectly, to the faculty position." Just as apparent, though, is that comprehensive faculty evaluation procedures—where they exist—are often too new, themselves, to be evaluated.

"Faculty evaluation is all wound-up with accountability."

Who Evaluates and Why

According to the Board survey, the department chairperson and the chief academic officer (academic dean, vice president or equivalent) are those persons primarily responsible for evaluation for all purposes in all types of institutions. Next in order of responsibility for evaluation for salary, promotion and tenure are high administrative officers (presidents, chancellors, provosts) and faculty committees.

For faculty development purposes, students and the evaluated faculty members are next in order of responsibility after the academic dean and department chairperson. Dr. Boyd found little use of alumni, joint student-faculty committees, or peers from other institutions in evaluation for any purposes. (He did note, however, that doctoral institutions use peer review more frequently than do other post-secondary institutions.)

Decision-makers don't arrive at such decisions in isolation, of course. For this reason, the sources consulted wield a great deal of power. Prime among these are the faculty members, whose consultation is included in many formal evaluation systems. The Board study found, for example, that over two-thirds of the doctoral institutions surveyed (but only 17 percent of associate degree institutions) use faculty committees.

One example of a faculty-oriented setup is at Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida, where every faculty member is subject to review by a faculty evaluation committee which meets at least annually for the evaluation of non-tenured faculty. On the basis of 10 or more evaluative criteria, the committee recommends to the president on matters relating to faculty reappointment, promotion, tenure and/or salary. Reappointments, for example, are made by the president only after the candidate has been approved by a majority of the members of the evaluation committee. In addition, because a primary committee responsibility is to consider faculty professional development, recommendations for improving teaching effectiveness are made directly to the faculty member evaluated.

At larger institutions, such as the University of Alabama, each division and each department within each division has a committee or committees to deal with retention, tenure and promotion by procedures determined at the departmental or divisional level.

Nationwide, according to Dr. Peter Seldin of Fordham University, who surveyed 410 deans on the criteria for determining teaching effectiveness for advancement purposes, colleague opinions are the most widely used method of evaluating teaching performance. But it's a method Dr. Seldin finds suspect, since colleagues rarely visit classrooms to observe teaching firsthand. He found, in fact, that 95 percent of institutions surveyed eschewed classroom visits because they provoke faculty resistance and are too expensive and subjective.

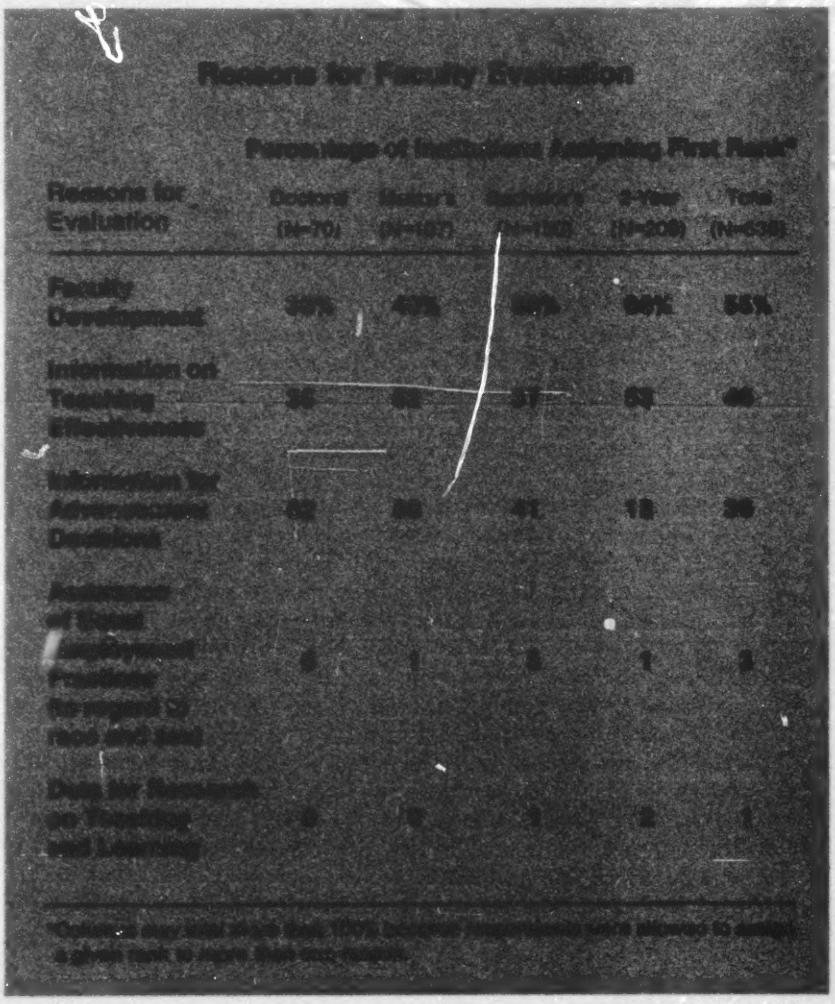
Alumni are also occasionally a source of data for evaluation purposes. One private Tennessee institution, for example, reports that when its "biggest single evaluation" arises—that preceding the granting of tenure—questionnaires are sent to alumni who were former students of the professor. Those responses, together with the department head's opinion, go to a dean and finally, to an advisory committee on promotion and tenure composed of elected faculty members. Such use of alumni for evaluation purposes is far more likely to occur at private institutions than public ones, Dr. Boyd reports.

The primary reason SREB survey respondents gave for having faculty evaluation was faculty development and improvement. The provision of diagnostic information on teaching behavior and effectiveness—often an important factor in faculty improvement—and of data on which to make decisions regarding reappointment, promotion and tenure were the two other major reasons listed for having faculty evaluation. There are significant differences within types of institutions in these goals, however. For example, doctoral institutions surveyed were more likely to view faculty evaluation primarily as a tool for decision-making about reappointment, promotion and tenure.

Student Evaluation

One growing resource for evaluation processes—particularly in the area of instruction—is the student population. The reasons for student input are obvious, the most primary, perhaps, being the fact that students—either by word of mouth, fraternity files or underground faculty-course guides—were already advising other students on which courses to take and which professors to avoid. Formalizing their opinions through questionnaires supplied and interpreted by the institution thus became a means to assist the students with more systematic evaluation, while at the same time providing invaluable firsthand information on a faculty member's teaching skills.

The latter is particularly the case, since instruction is perhaps the most complex dimension of faculty activity to measure. Whereas colleague evaluation can be used in regard to such things as course content, up-to-dateness of material and appropriateness of resource materials, the final question of


Reasons for Faculty Evaluation
Reasons for Evaluation
Faculty Development
Information on Teaching Effectiveness
Information for Administrative Decisions
Assessment of Equal Employment Practices
Data for Research on Teaching and Learning

Not the least of the sources consulted in faculty evaluation should be, many believe, the faculty member being reviewed. The SREB study documents this: 39 percent of doctoral institutions and up to 61 percent of associate institutions use self-evaluation for developmental purposes.

Dr. Loren Williams, Director of the Educational Planning and Development Program, Medical College of Virginia, believes that placing more of the responsibility for evaluation on the shoulders of individual faculty members makes so much sense, in fact, that it will be the norm—together with greater explicitness in all evaluative criteria—in the future.

The Growth Contract: "It may sound naive, but it's really very sophisticated."

"The individual faculty member is the one that stands to benefit or lose from the process," he argues, "and thus should have a major responsibility instead of others doing things to him, about him and for him." One avenue that Williams' program is exploring is that of having each faculty person prepare a dossier to include goals and objectives, as well as a narrative discussion and assessment of how he or she intends to achieve them. Also included, however, would be whatever outside opinion or documentation the faculty member chooses to include—such as student evaluations or peer reviews. By such a method, says Dr. Williams, the faculty member has control of the process by having a choice of input.

In the Southern region there are several schools which are geared toward such control. At Columbus College in Columbus, Georgia, for example, every quarter each faculty member completes a "Faculty Effort Report" and a "Faculty Service Report," both of which, after verification by the division head, are sent to the dean for use in promotion and salary determination. In addition, auto-critiques or self-ratings are part of the in-service program for new faculty members; this, however, is for instructional improvement, not promotional purposes.

At Austin College in Sherman, Texas, faculty members individually design their self-development evaluation plans. Each plan generally takes into account the individual's own background, needs, interests and total career development program. According to published guidelines, the faculty member tries to develop answers to questions such as:

- what do I need to find out about my behavior?
- what areas need to be evaluated preparatory to possible efforts at improvement?
- what type of feedback would be most helpful to me as I take steps to improve my effectiveness?

After the initial plan has been developed by the faculty member and approved by the area chairperson, it is the responsibility of the faculty member to implement it in a reasonable and orderly manner.

One particularly well-developed approach to self-evaluation is the growth contract, now in its sixth year at New College, a small non-traditional part of the University of Alabama designed to serve as an experimental college and a change agent for the University. Since faculty and staff members at New College are considered to be in a "co-learning relationship" with students, the college reasons, then they too should be evaluated. So each individual faculty and staff member (including Dr. Neal Berte, dean of New College, and the clerical and secretarial staff who come in contact with students) enters into a contract to continue learning.

But not just "book learning." The traditional method of being successful in a university or college environment involves building on the skill which is already most developed (e.g., publishing in the area one knows best) rather than upgrading skills in other areas. By contrast, faculty at New College choose to think in terms of a "total approach" to their growth.

"We've made the assumption for so long that once you endure to the doctoral level, you know how to teach and advise. I think it's important," Dr. Berte says, "for a faculty member to be able to say, 'I don't do that well, and I need your help.'"

ulty Development

So faculty do just that. Each person meets twice yearly with another professional of his or her choice (often the dean or a colleague) to go over the contract the faculty member has drawn up and again to see how the person has measured up to his or her own goals and objectives. In this setting the individual draws up a contract which may cover everything from her desire to stop smoking to his need to take criticism better. Included are not just goals and plans for action in the teaching-learning process, but also for growth and development in professional, administrative and personal areas.

The growth contract is not used in the reward structure—all faculty have joint appointments and are subject to evaluation for promotion, reappointment and tenure through more traditional processes within the New College and their other departments —because, says Dr. Berte, "A lot depends on the non-punitive atmosphere. This frees them up to be more honest."

Yet there is a philosophic connection between the growth contract and one's advancement because, as one observer of the system puts it, "the faculty member and his evaluators have their heads in the same direction." Moreover, faculty have a personal stake in their professional development, so many growth contracts include, for example, those steps they feel would help them to gain tenure or help them to get better student evaluations. But regardless of the flexibility of the system, faculty and staff are accountable and deadlines are made and met.

"Traditionally, evaluating meant judging and there were only two grades: good or bad."

To Harriet Cabell, associate director of the External Degree Program at New College and author of her own growth contracts, the process "may sound naive, but it's really very sophisticated. The traditional evaluation process has been used for judging not helping and there are only two grades—good or bad," she says. "But with the growth contract," she continues, "it really works, because someone is showing confidence in your ability to grow." The feeling of "being listened to," she added, is invaluable.

As these examples illustrate, there is a natural connection between such development-oriented self-evaluation systems as those at Austin College and New College, and regular evaluation. It is, namely, that if faculty members are to be held accountable for their teaching effectiveness then some non-threatening way must be instituted to train people in these skills.

To help teachers teach—and advisors advise, or settled faculty members learn to deal with a new student clientele—staff development centers have been born on many campuses. There are over 200 such projects nationwide. In the 14-state Southern region there are at least a score of such teaching improvement centers, and a recent conference on the subject sponsored by the University of Kentucky and SREB brought representatives from more than a score more institutions interested in starting such centers.

Usually located at major universities, the centers exist under a variety of names (Learning Resource Center, Teaching Effectiveness Center, etc.), usually under the auspices of the academic dean or vice president. They exist as clearinghouses of information, laboratories with technical and media support, and catalysts for instructional change.

Such centers are always voluntary for faculty members and independent from the faculty evaluation process, though some centers do help devise forms for evaluating teaching effectiveness. Their existence, to many, spells a new era for higher education, one in which the responsibility for instruction is encouraged by the university, but borne by the individual faculty person.

"No one can plan faculty development for anyone else," is the way William Taylor of Stony Brook phrased it in a recent *Chronicle of Higher Education* article on the subject. "It would be like trying to plan maturity."

whether well-drawn-up syllabi result in student learning is hard to answer.

This may have been the reason that, at the recent International Conference on Improving University Teaching at Heidelberg, according to Arthur M. Hughes of the University of Maryland, University College, "Systematic student evaluation was the only method which received wide endorsement from the literature, from university deans and from the conferees."

One questionnaire respondent who obviously concurs, explains why. "After 16 years of supervising faculty evaluations by students, as well as studying other references on the subject, it is my conclusion that students give the best base for evaluating a teacher," he wrote. "In evaluating our faculty, we have found that our students are candid, honest, realistic, fair and objective. It is uncanny how the graphs of posted ratings of students in three separate class sections of a teacher will be so similar on nearly every point."

Generally, student input is for faculty development purposes, not for decision-making about reappointment, promotion and tenure, and thus results are fed back to faculty members. Within the region, forms range from standardized questionnaires (such as the Illinois Course Evaluation Questionnaire) to elaborate institutionally-developed ones (such as Florida State University's Student Instructional Rating System which provides teachers with detailed printouts) to unsophisticated mimeographed forms. Often such forms vary from division to department as well.

Individual items are generally geared toward isolating five or more "good teacher" skills: the possession of scholarship; organization (e.g., "Instructor summarizes major points"); instructor-group interaction ("Instructor generally seemed to sense when students understood the material"); instructor-to-individual student interaction; and enthusiasm for subject matter.

Depending upon format and institution, items can range from the mundane ("Explains grading procedures") to the seemingly picky ("Talks too fast") to the intimidating ("Rate this teacher on a scale from 'one of the best I have every had' to 'one of the worst I have ever had' ").

Tailoring Needs

One reason that student evaluation of faculty may be a growing phenomenon in the Southern institution is because instruction, according to the clear majority of questionnaire respondents, is considered the most important factor in faculty evaluation for advancement purposes in all institutions.

Instruction, perhaps the most complex skill to measure, is also the most important factor in faculty evaluation for advancement purposes.

Among the region's doctoral institutions the criteria emphasized in evaluation for promotion, reappointment and tenure are still the "big three"—instructional activity, research and publication. (Although public service generally lags, Dr. Boyd revealed that 58 percent of the respondents from large public universities rated public service from first to third, out of nine criteria, in importance—a significant stride for what was once considered the "step child" of higher education.)

There are shifts in emphasis in most other institutions surveyed, however. As David H. Stockham, assistant to the vice president for student affairs at the University of Kentucky, phrased it, "Advising has been elevated to a legitimate and rewardable activity." Indeed, student advising, the Board found, ranks second in all degree type institutions (except doctoral ones) in factors considered for advancement.

This marks quite a change. As Melvene Hardee, professor of higher education at Florida State University, put it, there used to be four stereotypes of advisors:

- the 1,000 mile check-up (makes up a four-year plan; student "checks in" periodically);
- the automat ("put a coin in and out comes a schedule");
- the mother-hen (a "total protector" who makes decisions for the student);
- patch-after-crash (doesn't give advice until student is in difficulty).

But with the stepped-up accountability of institutions and consumerism of students (who are less and less willing, as one source put it, to "get the runaround that on some campuses is better than jogging"), faculty members increasingly are being asked to be comfortable not only with developmental stages of younger students, but with the special concerns of non-traditional students, as well as the changing manpower picture. Says Dr. Paul Edgerton, associate dean of students at Indiana State University and a Board consultant on advising, "the new advisor is one who must be willing and able to help students discuss goals and achieve them."

After instruction and advising, third among factors that institut-

tions considered in evaluation for advancement are administrative activities (for example, serving on faculty committees ranging from curricular design to university policy-making). After these, in order of rank, were personal attributes, research, publications, activity in professional societies, public service and civic activities. The high rating of "personal attributes" was especially true in smaller institutions—it ranked third among baccalaureate degree institutions.

Criteria for evaluation are not usually as rigid, however, as this listing might imply. For, the evaluation process must be tailored not only to meet the mission of the institution, but also to reflect the various departmental and divisional functions. Often individual divisions decide the relative weightings of the various criteria and in many schools probationary faculty members are expected to demonstrate a high level of ability and accomplishment in at least two of the general categories of evaluation, satisfactory performance in a third.

"Anxiety in the Short Run"

If, as one college president in the region phrased it, "faculty evaluation is frightening" because those "in education have not yet devised a system which is clearly understood and accepted," then the move toward more explicit—but yet flexible—criteria for evaluation would seem to be one that is welcomed on Southern campuses.

Is it? The answer, according to questionnaire respondents, is a qualified "yes." "Initially," said one vice president, echoing the opinions of many, "the student evaluation created significant anxiety as did the formal evaluation of faculty members by department chairmen. Over time, however, this anxiety has been eliminated and now, I believe, the faculty favors open evaluation."

As this administrator suggests, much of the initial resentment toward accelerated evaluation procedures is directed toward the introduction of student evaluations, which are seen by many as violations of privacy and professionalism.

Student advising has been elevated to a "legitimate and rewardable activity."

Mervin Freedman and Nevitt Sanford isolate what may be a critical factor in faculty resistance to student evaluation in their article, "The Faculty Member Yesterday and Today." Most faculty members, they argue, "cannot assimilate such criticism, no matter how much they might benefit from it. Teaching is a highly personal matter, and criticism of one's effort is experienced and resisted as a direct attack on one's self." Hence, they continue, "most systems of student evaluation of faculty or teaching become *pro forma* rituals that allow all participants in the procedure to go on behaving as they always have."

Yet, although questionnaire respondents documented such resistance (some feel "under the gun in the classroom," as one dean put it) the survey responses suggest that this resentment fades with exposure and with the realization that, in most cases, such evaluation will be used for self-development purposes and not for advancement.

And student evaluation does produce results, reportedly, in terms of increased sensitivity to student needs and better instruction. As one Marylander put it, "It reduced the tendency for reviewer and reviewee to regard lack of complaint by students as testimony of high-quality teaching."

A Virginia dean concurred. "Prior to the formal evaluation program," he said, "this university talked about quality teaching. The effect of the program was to indicate that much more than lip service was to be paid to it."

Although there was some reported "confusion and anxiety in the short run" in the use of more explicit guidelines for evaluation for advancement purposes, in cases where deans felt sufficient time had passed for judgment, the consensus was that it was generally well accepted—by faculty and administration.

Faculty favor the fact that uniform criteria are being established. As one Maryland dean put it "The process has been taken out of hallways and bathrooms and made more objective and fair." The practice of feeding back information to faculty members—used by most institutions surveyed—was also heralded by faculty who as a result can more easily determine perceived strengths and weaknesses, or, if need be, defend themselves against inaccurate or unfair ratings.

Because evaluation processes that are comprehensive, explicit and uniform provide documented evidence for promotion decisions, administrators also usually end up welcoming them, even though the new practices may be more time-consuming. Perhaps just as important, however, is the growing confidence in administrators that apparently results from specific guidelines. "It lessened concern about arbitrary and capricious decisions by the administration," said the dean of one Virginia university. As a result, he added, there is a greater understanding between the faculty and administration.